

# BEADLE'S Dime New York Library

COPYRIGHTED IN 1884, BY BEADLE & ADAMS.

ENTERED AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, N. Y., AT SECOND CLASS MAIL RATES.

Vol. XXV.

Published Every  
Wednesday.

*Beadle & Adams, Publishers,*

98 WILLIAM STREET, N. Y., October 29 1884.

Ten Cents a Copy.  
\$5.00 a Year.

No. 314

## LAFITTE;

Or, THE PIRATE OF THE GULF.

BY PROF. J. H. INGRAHAM.



LAFITTE WIELDED IN HIS RIGHT HAND HIS FORMIDABLE CUTLASS, UPON WHICH HE RECEIVED THE RINGING STEEL OF THE OFFICER.

## Lafitte;

OR,

## THE PIRATE OF THE GULF.

BY PROF. J. H. INGRAHAM.

Revised and Edited

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

## CHAPTER I.

## AN EXILE'S HOME.

In a secluded and richly-wooded amphitheater, formed by a crescent of green hills, among which the romantic Kennebec wanders to the ocean, there stood, until within a recent period, the ruins of a stately mansion. Its walls were enameled with dark-green moss, and mantled with vines, as if Nature, with a gentle hand, had striven to conceal the devastations of Time.

Huge chimneys, terminating in fantastic turrets, heavy cornices, deep moldings and panel-work, combined with the elaborate architecture of the whole venerable structure, indicated a relic of that substantial age immediately subsequent to the Revolutionary War—an age, although then in its decline, as eminently characterized by moral and physical stability as the present by their opposites.

At the period of our tale the handsome edifice of which these melancholy ruins were both the monument and mausoleum, reared its lofty walls amid a grove of oaks, whose hoary bodies and the majestic spread of their gnarled and giant limbs, while they told of their great age—numbered by centuries not years—bore testimony to the dignity and grandeur of the primeval forest of which they were alone the representatives.

Beneath the thickly-interlaced branches of these trees, and sloping gently to the shore of the river, lay, outrolled, a lawn of the thickest verdure. It was relieved and enlivened by half a score of ruminating, well-conditioned cows, standing or reclining in attitudes indicative of comfort and repose, and a small flock of long-fleeced sheep, of a rare and valued breed, was dispersed in picturesque groups under the more venerable trees. A gracefully formed juniper—conjuring up visions of lovely woman, in velvet hat, nodding plumes, and generous robes sweeping the earth, which the spirited animal beneath her disdains with his delicate hoofs—a beautiful, slender-limbed saddle-horse—and a brace of coal-black ponies, with long tails and flowing manes, which are at once associated with boys and holidays—stood together in a social group beside a small but romantic lake in the midst of the wood.

This pellucid sheet of water was spanned by a fantastic bridge of trestle-work, suspended with the lightness of a spider's web from one green bank to the other. It connected a broad graveled avenue, which, commencing at the river, wound among the trees, yielding to the natural undulations of the grounds, and terminated at the spacious flight of steps leading to the piazza of the mansion, the two fronts of which were ornamented by a light colonnade of eight slender Ionic columns. Tall windows extended quite to the floor of the piazza, and, defended by Venetian blinds, served as the only entrances to the interior, from the front.

The house faced to the west, and commanded an extensive prospect of the river, sweeping boldly around the peninsula upon which it was situated, and forming, at the distance of half a mile, a noble bend, remarkable for the extreme beauty of its curvature. Beyond, ascending to the horizon, as they retreated from the eye, spread cultivated farms, studded with farm-houses and huge barns; more remotely, dense forests blended with the bases of a chain of low, blue mountains, known as the Monmouth hills.

At the north and south, the view was shut in by alternately cultivated and thickly-wooded hills or rocky eminences, retreating on either hand from the river in a semicircular form, to a little less than a mile in the rear, and inclosing the dwelling and grounds in a glen, which, also embraced on the western side by the curve of the river, presented an area nearly circular in its shape.

Political events in sunny France—in which the proprietor of this lovely domain bore no ordinary share, compelled him to seek a land where he could cherish his liberal principles with safety, and educate his twin sons to act their part honorably and with distinction on the theater of life.

Orphans from their birth, his sons never knew their mother. The hour which ushered them into existence ushered her spirit into heaven. Strangers to maternal love, and educated, since the exile of their stern parent, in almost monastic seclusion, they early attained an uncommon maturity of mind and firmness of character, combined with manly sentiments and a habit of thinking independently, early taught them by their father's example, and inculcated, cultivated, and wrought out to maturity by him, with untiring assiduity.

Their fifteenth birthday arrived, and although in years they numbered equally, in mind, and person, and habits, they were wholly dissimilar. Achille, the eldest of the twins, had attained dignity of mind and manly beauty of person far in advance of his years. Tall and finely proportioned, he was the youthful image of his noble father. Proud, aspiring, and ambitious, with a spirit that spurned severity, but yielded to gentleness, he acted from impulse rather than from reflection or a sense of duty; while a mine of passions, never yet sprung, existed like a slumbering volcano in his bosom. It required but a spark to produce a conflagration that should feed upon and torture him like another Prometheus, or burn on, extinguishable only with life.

That spark was at length elicited by his brother, an amiable boy of a milder nature, retiring habits and quiet disposition. The reverse of Achille, he was apparently as meek as his brother was spirited. The former resembled his father; but Henri represented his mother and her gentler virtues. He not only represented the excellence of her heart and mind, but her lovely image was revived in his beautiful countenance; and, as year after year unfolded in his youthful face the more striking and perfect resemblance his graceful features bore to those of his deceased mother, the father recognized the features of the fair girl who had won his early affections, and whom, during the few short months of their union, he had worshiped with religious devotion.

Achille was the stronger, physically and intellectually, and, unconsciously to the subject, exerted that wonderful influence over Henri which mind will often assert over mind. He was his guide in his studies, his leader in sports, his enticer into dangers, and his assistant in the thousand petty difficulties of childhood. He loved him with a sincere and devoted attachment, fervently reciprocated by his warm-hearted and unsophisticated brother. But their mutual affection was the principle which unites the vine and the oak. His brother's love was the stay of Henri's clinging affections, and his endearing attachment, by drawing out the kindlier feelings of his sterner nature, rendered Achille better and happier.

The morning which ushered in their fifteenth birthday was bright and cloudless. Achille was standing in the south window of his father's library, his person half-concealed by the rich drapery, gazing out upon the limpid river as it glided silently past.

The green meadows beyond the river, sprinkled with flocks, faded into the blue haze floating around the distant hills. The air was alive with melody from a myriad of glad birds, climbing the rosy skies, and emulating the poised lark thrilling forth his matin-song to the rising sun. There was a charm of beauty, peace, and rural happiness thrown over nature. Her works breathed inspiration, and spoke that morning in the sweetest accents of his heart. But he heeded not her language. A voice softer-toned and more eloquent, pleaded to his soul. It was the voice of ambition. Of boyish ambition it is true, but still ambition in her loftiest mood. In years but a boy, the sterner spirit of a man dwelt in the swelling bosom of the young aspirant. Visions of the unvalued future, wherein appeared pageants of conquering armies, thrones and scenes of vast dominion, floated before his youthful imagination; and in the leader of the armies, the occupant of the thrones, the controller of empires, he recognized HIMSELF!

## CHAPTER II.

## A CATASTROPHE THAT ENDED IN REMORSE.

## "ACHILLE!"

The young aspirant started from the contemplation of scenes of triumph and empire, carnage and blood—the last too soon to be realized—and beheld standing by his side his father, who had entered the library and approached him unperceived. Seating himself in the recess of the window, he motioned his son to a chair, placed opposite to his own. The bearing of the veteran exile was at all times dignified and imposing.

The affection of Achille toward him was not unmingled with sentiments of fear. But he was the only being before whom the proud eye of the boy quailed!

That his father loved him, he had never doubted. He knew that he was proud of him, "his noble, fearless boy," as he would term him, while parting the dark hair from his handsome forehead, after he had performed some daring feat of boyhood. When, however, he spoke to Henri, the gratified and proud expression of his eye softened under the influence of a milder feeling, and his smile would fade into a sweet but melancholy expression; nor would Achille have exchanged his inspiring language to him, "his daring boy!" for the kind tone and manner he involuntarily assumed when he would say, "Henri, my child, come and amuse me with your prattle!"—nor would the tearful eye, as he gazed into the upturned face of the amiable boy, have pleased his wild spirit like the enkindling glance of that admiring eye, when turned upon him in paternal pride. Achille translated his glance of pride into an expression of love, and sympathized with one

so evidently regarded with an air of sorrow, if not of pity, as his brother. If he gave the subject a moment's reflection, it resulted in the flattering conviction that he himself was the favorite son.

The morning which introduces him to our notice, he learned, too painfully, that Henri was the favorite child of the old soldier's affection, and that, so far from loving him but a little less, he loved him *not*. The look of affection which he had regarded as an expression of compassion for the gentler nature of his brother, he learned was an expression of the intensest parental affection. Indeed, in his brother, his father worshiped the image of his departed wife; and all his affection for her, which the hand of death had withered in its freshness, was renewed in his beloved Henri. He was doubly loved—for his mother and for himself; and there remained for Achille—so the sensitive and high spirited boy learned that day—no place in the affection of his only parent.

His father, after being seated, addressed him: "Achille, you are now of an age to enter the university, for admission to which the nature and extent of your studies eminently qualify you. In a few days, the annual examination of candidates will take place. In the interval, you can select and arrange a library for your room, and collect what other conveniences you may require. You will leave in the first packet that passes down the river."

This was a delightful announcement to the subject of it, and not wholly unexpected. To the university, that world in miniature, he had long looked forward with pleasurable anticipation.

The two brothers had both prepared for admission into the same class, and he inquired if Henri was to accompany him.

"He is not," replied the father, coldly and firmly.

"He is certainly prepared, sir."

"Undoubtedly! But I have decided that he is to be my companion to Europe this season, as I fear his delicate constitution will not admit of his confining himself at present to sedentary pursuits."

"I was anticipating that happiness for myself," he replied, chagrined at his father's preference for his brother, so unexpectedly manifested, not only by his words but by his tone and manner. He had long known that it was his intention to visit his native land, and expected to accompany him, although his expectations were founded rather on his own wishes than any encouragement he had received from him.

Achille felt keenly the preference. The coldness, if not severity, of manner assumed by his father in communicating his determination offended his pride, while his decided partiality for his brother wounded his self-love. He was well aware that, his resolution once formed, he was unbending—that his brother was to go, and that he was to remain; and with a bitter and wounded spirit he turned his darkening brow from the penetrating gaze of his father, and looked forth upon the peaceful scene outspread beneath the windows of the library.

A closing door roused him from his gloomy and sinful reverie, and turning, he saw that he was once more alone. No—not quite alone! An evil spirit—jealousy! pregnant with dark thoughts and evil imaginings, was his companion. An hour passed away, and he still stood where his father left him. Then took place his first fierce conflict with his hitherto slumbering passions. The first suspicion that his brother was loved the best then entered his thoughts. Once admitted, it undermined, by its subtle logic, the better feelings of his heart.

But an hour had expired, and the canker-worm of hatred was gnawing at the last fiber that bound him to his brother, when the hall door was thrown open, and the guileless subject of his dark meditations bounded into the room, holding in his extended hand a gemmed locket.

"See, brother, see!" he exclaimed, in a loud and delighted tone, "what my dear father has presented me as a birthday's gift!"

Achille raised his eyes and fixed them upon the sparkling locket, which inclosed the miniature of an exceedingly beautiful female. He recognized the portrait of their mother, which, till that moment, had ever been worn, as the pilgrim wears the cross, next to the heart of his father.

Now he saw the cherished relic in the possession of his brother, a gift from him. His lip curled, and his dark eye became darker still at this stronger confirmation of his father's partiality; yet he neither spake nor betrayed his feelings by any visible emotion, but the fires within his breast raged still fiercer. Like pent-up flames, his passions gained vigor by the efforts made to smother them.

For the first time in his life he looked upon Henri without a smile of tenderness. He felt, indeed, although his lips moved not with the biting words rising to them, that the poison of his heart must have been communicated to his eyes, for, as his brother caught their unwonted expression, he suddenly checked himself, and the gay tones of his voice sunk subdued to a





"Have you met with any game?" he inquired.  
"Yes, brother, a sweet dove and a cunning hawk."

"Did you secure the birds?"

"Ay, the hawk; but the dove—the dove, although it wounded me with its angry bill, I could not stain its snowy plumage with red blood. But the subtler bird I have meshed."

"Brother, your language and manner are strange and unwonted, and your face by this faint light looks pale and haggard. Have you met with aught to imbitter your spirit during the day?"

They now, having walked slowly forward while speaking, stood upon the spot where Henri and Gertrude plighted their loves in the sight of Achille. He made no reply, but stopping, suddenly seized him with energy by the arm, and gazed fixedly and revengefully in his face.

"What mean you, brother? Unhand me, Achille!" exclaimed Henri, alarmed.

"Know you where you stand?" he loudly and angrily demanded.

"Release me, brother—what is your mad purpose?"

"Ay, mad!" he reiterated. "Yes, I am mad. Know you where you stand?" he repeated, in a harsh voice, while his eyes glowed visibly even in the deep shadows in which they stood.

"God of Heaven!" he shouted fiercely, on receiving no reply. "Speak, craven, or thus I'll crush you!" and with his iron fingers he pressed the throat of his victim.

"Unhand me, brother!" cried Henri, till now unresisting in the grasp of one from whom he apprehended no real injury, and whose violent rage he supposed would soon subside. But he knew not the irresistible power of the stream which he himself, perhaps unconsciously, had contributed to swell. He had not traced it from the fountain, through all its devious and subterranean windings, fed by a thousand hidden springs, until it approached the precipice over which it was about to thunder a terrible and mighty cataract.

"Do me no harm, Achille; I am your brother!" he added, and with a strong effort freed his throat from his grasp.

"So was Abel his brother's brother, and so—" and his lip withered with scorn and hatred as he spoke: "and so is Henri MINE! but revenge—I love dearer still. Henri, I bate you! Know you this accursed spot, I again repeat?"

Henri, now released from his violent hold, stood proudly up, and baring his pale brow to the moonlight, which fell down upon it through an opening in the foliage like the visible presence of a blessing, answered:

"I do, sir; it is consecrated ground; and I learn from your strange language and manner that you have witnessed the sacred ceremony which has hallowed it!"

He spoke calmly and in a tone of dignity, while a proud, if not sarcastic, smile played faintly over his lips. Achille, already insane with passion, fiercely shouted:

"And it should be doubly consecrated by a sacrifice of blood! Proud fool, your mockery has sealed your fate. I needed only *this*!" and springing fiercely upon him, he seized him by the breast with one hand, and, glancing in the moon while he brandished it in the air, his glittering hunting-knife descended into the bosom of his victim. The warm blood spurted into the face of the fratricide, and bathed his hand in gore.

"Oh, Gertrude—my father—God—brother! I for—forgive," he faintly articulated, and with a groan that sunk to the heart of the murderer, fell heavily to the ground.

For a few moments the guilty being stood over the prostrate body, with his arm outstretched in the position in which he had given the fatal blow; his features rigid, his eyes glazed, and his whole person as motionless as marble—the statue of a murderer chiseled to the life! During that brief moment he endured an eternity of suffering. The torments of ages were compressed into one single moment of time!

But we will not dwell upon this scene. The fratricide fled beneath the cold moon and glittering stars, which, like eyes of intelligence, seemed to look down reprovingly upon him. Onward he hastened, nor dared to look up to them. The little light they shed became hateful, and he felt as if he would draw darkness around him like a garment, hiding himself from both God and man.

"Oh, that the rocks would fall, and hide me forever from myself!" he groaned inwardly, and a loud voice within cried, "Vain, vain! live on! live on forever!" And he buried his face in his cloak, and fled still onward.

The morning broke, and the miserable fugitive still pursued the path which led along the shores of the river to the sea. As the light increased, he saw for the first time that his dress was sprinkled with his brother's blood. He shuddered, and the fatal scene rushed once more upon his mind in all its horrors. Hastily plunging into the river (alas! for the tales of blood of which river and sea are the dumb repositories), he removed all traces of the deed he had committed from his person.

Two hours before sunset he came in sight of the bay, its bosom relieved by many green islands and dotted with white sails. He hailed the broad ocean in the distance with a thrill of pleasure.

Hastening to the coast, which was guarded by precipices, he swung himself down their sides with that recklessness, often the surest means of success, and, springing into a small boat, left in a cove by some of the fishermen, whose huts were scattered in picturesque sites along the cliffs, he raised the little triangular sail, and steered out to sea.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BUCCANEERS OF BARRATARIA.

OUR story now changes to a new theater, with scenes of fresher interest, before which characters move and act who have borne no inconsiderable part in the great drama of the second and last War of Independence, between the United States and Great Britain.

A few years before the commencement of this memorable war, a daring band of privateersmen, inured to every hardship to be encountered in storms of battle or of the elements, and as free as the winds which filled their sails, had obtained commissions from the new Government of Carthage, then first struggling for independence, to cruise against the royalists, or vessels sailing under the flag of Spain. By the authority of these commissions they not only made numerous captures on the great highway of nations, but blockaded many Spanish ports in the Mexican and West Indian seas.

The prizes, which their lawless mode of translating special commissions, and that delusion of the visual organs which led them to see in every flag the gorgeous blazonry of his Majesty of Spain, against whom they had declared open war, enabled them to seize, were taken into the secret bayous and creeks adjacent to the mouth of the Mississippi, where they were effectually concealed and safe from capture or pursuit.

The most important passes made use of by these buccaneers, and with which the scenes of our tale are more immediately connected, lie about twenty leagues to the west of the delta of the Mississippi, and about forty miles southwest of the city of New Orleans. Here, an arm of the Mexican gulf extends four or five leagues inland, terminating in the mouths of several bayous or creeks, which, by many devious and intricate windings, known only to the smugglers, reached to within a few miles of New Orleans. They were navigable only for boats, which here were accustomed to discharge their unlawful freights taken from captured vessels, from whence, through other and more commercial hands, they obtained a rapid and secret conveyance to the city.

This arm of the Gulf is termed the Bay of Barrataria, so called, from that system of naval barratry characterizing the class of men which usually frequented it. The mouth of this bay, or lake, as it is more generally denominated, from being nearly encircled by the land, is defended by a small island about two leagues in length and three miles in breadth, lying in a direction east and west, and nearly parallel with the line of the coast, leaving two narrow passes or entrances to the lake from the Gulf.

That on the east, at the period with which we are to identify our tale, was exceedingly shallow, allowing only the passage of boats of light draught; and the western and main pass only admitted vessels drawing nine and ten feet of water. This island, which is called, indiscriminately, Grande Terre and Barrataria, is not an unbroken level, like the surrounding low lands, constituting the southern section of Louisiana; but, with a striking geological feature in reference to the aspect of this region, it rises abruptly from the sea with bold and precipitous sides, sometimes swelling into slight eminences, several feet in height, covered with dense forests, in which, superior to all other trees, towers the live-oak in its iron strength. Both extremities of this island, at the time of which we speak, were strongly fortified and bristled with cannon, completely commanding both entrances to the inner bay or lake.

Close within the western and deeper inlet to the right, and effectually concealed by the intervening islands from the open sea, from which it was about three leagues distant, was a safe and commodious anchorage; the only secure harbor for many leagues along that dangerous coast.

This island, with its anchorage, was the principal resort of the Carthaginian smugglers. From their little territory, which, in the face of the Government of the United States, they had boldly usurped, the fame of their extraordinary deeds went abroad over sea and land, till the name of Barrataria was associated in the minds of men with crimes and deeds of outlawry, unparalleled in the history of banned and outcast men.

For better security, and more efficient operations, these men, at first sailing singly, each upon his own desperate enterprise, ultimately associated themselves into one body, conferring the command of their squadron on an individual of their number, whose distinguished qualifications as a commander over such a fleet and such

men, manifested on many a bloody deck and many a desperate fight, marked him singularly as their leader.

Besides this great rendezvous of the buccaneers of Barrataria in Louisiana, there were two others of less importance; one of which was situated in an uninhabited part of the coast, in the neighborhood of Carthage, and the other in the West Indian seas, on the coast of the island of St. Domingo.

In one of the romantic bays with which the southern shore of the island of Jamaica is indented, and on one of the rich autumn evenings peculiar to the Indian seas, about fifteen years subsequent to the scenes narrated in the foregoing chapter, a long, low, black schooner, very taunt, and sharp in the bows, with all her light sails drawing freely, and a red and blue signal fluttering aloft, might have been seen bowling gallantly over the miniature waves of the bay, which glittered in the sunlight as if overlaid with gold.

On the deck of the little vessel, which was heavily armed and full of men, stood one of commanding person, whose features, as he leaned over the quarter-railing, were partially concealed by the drooping front of his broad palmetto hat; that portion of his face, however, which could be discerned, displayed a black silken mustachio, curving over a fine mouth, whose general expression was resolution. Now, however, a yellow cigar severed his lips, which languidly embraced it, while an occasional cloud of the blue smoke emitted from beneath his overshadowing hat, curled above his head, and, floating to leeward, blended with the evening haze.

Like one familiar with the scenery, he gazed listlessly upon the glorious prospect spread out before and around him, rising from the shores of the bay, and receding until the clouds bounded the view.

As the vessel sailed further into the bay, her commander's eye glanced with momentary animation along the land, resting upon the cots and hamlets of the negroes, the wall of a distant military post, and the white villas of the planters, dispersed picturesquely on the precipices, and in every green nook along the sides of the receding hills. The schooner, after running about a league into the land, suddenly altered her course, and stood for the entrance of a little harbor or recess of the bay; and now, under her mainsail and jib alone, coasted a bold shore, dotted here and there with a magnificent pimento—groves of which clothed the distant eminences. The summits of the cliffs, beneath which it sailed, were verdant with trees of thickest foliage; while, from their overhanging brows, tiny cataracts, like threads of silver, leaped down into the sea.

The inlet toward which she was advancing, was nearly inclosed by a chain of rocks, towering like gigantic pinnacles; and a craggy promontory overhanging the basin, half-encircled it on the west. Between the termination of this promontory, and the chain of rocks already mentioned, was visible a narrow passage, by which craft of small size only could pass, one at a time, into the pool, sleeping calm and deep within its rocky sides, which, frowning terrifically over it, cast beneath a dark shadow, even while the sun hung high in the heavens. At this time the shadows were deepened in the approaching twilight, and a mysterious gloom gathered over the spot.

Into this nook the little vessel shot rapidly, under the guidance of a skillful hand, and, running into its furthest extremity toward the main land, anchored under a projecting rock, which, cleft to its base, admitted a footway from the water to the plantations upon the highlands in the interior.

"List!" said a low, deep voice from the stern of the vessel; and the distant wail of a bugle fell, with a melancholy cadence, upon the ears of the listening seamen.

Again it rose and fell, low and plaintively, and hardly had the sound died in the air, when three sharp blasts were blown in rapid succession.

"That's the signal! Velasquez is as true as steel to his own avarice!" exclaimed the commander of the schooner. "Be ready all! Ten of you go with me. See to your pistols, and let every other man take a dark lantern and a cutlass, and have two oars slung for a barrow. The rest of you be still as the grave, and alert to obey my signals. Three pistols, Ricardo," he continued, addressing one of his officers, "fired in succession, will be our signal for a reinforcement, should the old Don be too hard for us. Now ashore, my men, all," he added, with rapidity and energy.

Accompanied by a handsome youth and a deformed slave, and followed by ten of his men, in red woolen caps and shirts, and without jackets, he sprung onto a projecting point of rock, and the next moment stood in the mouth of the cleft or defile, terminating at the top of the cliff.

"Madre de Dios!" exclaimed one, in a suppressed whisper, to his comrade by his side, casting his eyes up the narrow and precipitous pass they were slowly ascending, "this must be the up-stairs to purgatory."







steed. The next instant horse and rider would have been upon the buccaneer, had he not drawn a pistol from his girdle, and, half turning his flight, fired upon the dragoon. The ball sunk into the forehead of the horse, which with one plunge forward, fell lifeless upon his rider; and the contents of his pistol, which he discharged while falling, passed through the cap of the pirate. The remainder of the troop now came up, but the fate of their comrade for a moment checked the pursuit.

"Hold there, for your lives, men!" shouted their commanding officer, who had been outridden by his troop, and now rode up—"hold, do not fire, but surround and take him. It were better he should escape, than that fair girl be injured. A hundred guineas to him," he added, "who captures him dead or alive—but if the lady suffers harm, let him who gives the blow beware!"

The soldiers sullenly returned their pistols to their holsters and drew their swords. But there were now other objects on which to exercise them; for at this instant appeared a party of the pirate's crew, armed with cutlasses and fire-arms. They had left the schooner, and marched inland, on hearing the signal for succor made by their comrades, and were returning without meeting with them—they having, with the exception of Lafitte, gained the shore by another route, with the loss of two of their number shot down by the dragoons, and a portion of their booty. Striking their cutlasses against their pistols, with a loud noise, and cheering each other with shouts, they came on at a rapid pace; and before the dragoons could draw and cock their fire-arms to meet this new enemy, they were fired upon with fatal effect by the advancing buccaneers. Here and there, a rider fell from his steed at the discharge, while the wounded animals fled with wild cries through the forest.

"On, on! avenge our comrades!" cried the pirates, pressing forward to close with their foes; creeping under the horses, and passing their cutlasses up through their bodies; dragging the riders by main force from their seats, or springing behind them, and hurling them bodily to the ground.

The leader of the buccaneers, did not, however, derive any personal advantage from this reinforcement; for the captain of dragoons, dismounting, as the pirates made their desperate charge, cried, "Have at you, Sir Pirate, for my own pleasure, and rescue of that lady," advancing as he spoke with his drawn sword upon his antagonist, who, from the time he had killed the horse and dismounted the dragoon, had stood at bay, facing his foes, determined to fight his way, step by step, to his vessel.

His eye lighted up with pleasure, as he heard the challenge of the leader of the dragoons, a tall, gentlemanly-looking Englishman, with an Herculean frame, and a striking military air.

Anxious to get safe to his schooner, his lovely shield—whom he internally resolved should be forever his, although he had at first seized her to favor his escape, when, closely pursued, he retreated to the villa—he still moved slowly backward, facing his advancing foe. On his left arm he supported Constanza, her unconscious head laid upon his shoulder, while Lafitte wielded in his right hand his formidable cutlass, upon which he received the ringing steel of the officer.

In vain the Englishman used every device of art, and each favorite ruse, and as uselessly did he follow blow on blow, with tremendous force. The pirate coolly received his weapon upon his cutlass at every stroke, and, acting only on the defensive, still retreated steadily to the verge of the cliff.

"Now have at you, Sir Englishman!" he cried, as he reached the head of the defile leading to his vessel. "Now have at you, in my turn; if you love Lafitte so well, he will give you a lasting mark of his friendship. So, there!" he added, suddenly and emphatically, as the officer, at first making a feint, aimed a heavy blow at his head, which he intended should be his *coup de grace*; "so, there!" and while he received his antagonist's sword upon his own guard, by a peculiar motion, with the same movement of his arm, he struck it from his grasp, and, making a sweep over his head, his rapid cutlass whistling through the air, descended, and nearly severed the left arm of the Englishman from his body. The officer groaned, and fell heavily upon the ground, while Lafitte descended with rapidity the narrow defile to his schooner.

"Ho! Theodore! are you there, my boy?" he said, as he saw the slight form of the youth upon the deck; "receive this lady, and convey her to the starboard state-room, and try to restore her. Ricardo, be out of this place as soon as possible."

"The anchor is apeak, sir," replied his lieutenant; "and the boat is ahead with a towline."

As soon as the last man touched the deck, the commander uttered his orders for making sail with rapidity.

"Hoist away the jib and mainsail; set the topgallantsails and royals; we must make

everything tell! Give way, men!" he shouted to the manned boat ahead; "steadily—there she moves—bear off from that crag—bend to those oars, men—now she moves! Pull heartily and cheerily, or we shall be intercepted by a guarda costa!"

"A curse upon this night's work," he said to himself, turning and walking aft as the schooner yielded to the efforts of the crew. "This is well called the Devil's Punch-Bowl, and he is likely to have us all as ingredients for his next bumper."

In a few moments, the schooner, under the sweeps and the slightly drawing royals, glided swiftly over the water, and soon moved through the narrow entrance of the basin into the open bay.

## CHAPTER IX.

### AFTER THE CONFLICT.

THE moon was just fading in the western skies, and the well-defined outlines of the peak of St. Catharine was delicately gilded by the yet unrisen sun, the morning subsequent to the scenes and adventures related in the preceding chapters, when a white spot on the horizon attracted the attention of the wounded officer of dragoons, as, under the refreshing influence of the morning breeze, he recovered from the swoon into which he had fallen from loss of blood, after being struck down by the pirate.

Casting his eyes over the sea, he appeared to watch the speck with much interest; and surprise was manifest on his features, when, instead of receding, he perceived that it enlarged, and evidently approached the island.

"Can the buccaneer be returning?" he exclaimed; "but he might as well finish me, as leave me so!" and as he spoke, he raised, with a melancholy smile, his mutilated arm. "Well, Captain Adair," he continued, "you may hang your sword upon the willow now—this Lafitte has done for you! But that cannot be the pirate," he said, in a changed and eager tone; "his was a schooner, although she carried royals, like a sloop-of-war. Hal! there is another sail in her wake—a smaller craft—what can they be? Now the larger veers a little—she's a ship under topsails, and the other is a schooner, perhaps a tender. But yet he's not a John Bull!"

After a few minutes' silence, during which the anguish of his wound overcame every other feeling, he continued:

"It is either a Frenchman or an American; but what can she want here? Ha, there fly monsieur's colors!"

The vessel which had first attracted the notice of the officer was now plainly visible, about two leagues from the land. She was a large frigate, displaying the ensign of France at her peak, and the same national distinction also fluttered at the mast-head of the schooner. Standing into the bay before a free breeze, with royals and sky-sails towering aloft, and lower studding-sails set on both sides, in less than an hour from the time she appeared a mere speck, like the flash of a sea-gull's wing on the horizon, she had passed the capes of the bay. Running close into the land, and furling one sail after another, she gracefully rounded to, and, accompanied by the tender, came to an anchor opposite the entrance of the "Devil's Punch Bowl," and within the shadow a gigantic rock, to which nature had given the outline of a huge granite fortress.

As the last sail was furled closely to its yard, the dragoon saw a small boat put off from the frigate, manned by four men and a steersman. An officer in naval undress, with the insignia of the rank of a French captain upon his breast and collar, leaned back in the stern sheets, as the boat moved swiftly over the water, gazing upward upon the rock, rearing its dark mass against the sky—admiring its castellated outline, and pinnacles springing several hundred feet into the air.

The oarsmen pulled rapidly in to the beach at the base of the cliff, whose projecting verge, as they passed into its dark shadow, suddenly hid them from the eyes of the wounded officer.

"Lay to your oars briskly, men—one strong pull more—there we strike!" said the French officer, as, with a grating sound, the boat grounded upon the beach, running half her length out of the water, on to the hard, white sand.

Shipping their oars, the men sprung out, and respectfully raising their caps, as their officer passed by them in stepping ashore, turned to secure the boat from the action of the tide. Delaying a moment to arm themselves with sabers and pistols, which they took from the stern, they hastily buckled them around their waists, and stood ready to follow him.

While his men were thus engaged, under the command of the coxswain—a mere boy in the uniform of a midshipman—the officer stood with folded arms, and a thoughtful eye, gazing with all a seaman's pride upon his motionless frigate, as, towering above the dark hull, her lofty masts and slender spars appeared drawn with the accuracy of pencilling against the sky.

He was a slightly-formed man, rather below than above the medium height of men, with a

strikingly-elegant figure, finely displayed by his blue frock and dark-green cloak, falling negligently back from his shoulders in graceful folds. His forehead was high and expansive, over which, as he raised his velvet cap to meet the cool breezes from the sea, flowed, with almost feminine luxuriance, thick clusters of dark auburn hair. That softness of character which this peculiarity anticipated was, however, contradicted by the intellectual fullness of his brow and the firm expression of his blue eye, which, although it might droop before a maiden's gaze, could flash proudly back the glance of a foe.

A lock of his hair seemed trained to lie over his forehead, relieving the otherwise too oval contour of his face. His complexion, naturally fair, was a little sun-browned, by exposure to the sun and seas of many climates; and a healthy hue glowed upon his cheeks. His upper lip was graced with a mustachio of the same rich color as his hair. His lips were full, and rather voluptuous in their finely-curved outline, but without any approach to sensuality. The general expression of his features, when in repose, as they now were, was intellectual, and, perhaps, melancholy. He might be above thirty years of age, though the juvenile and extreme beauty of his noble forehead, the mantling cheek, and the curve of his mouth and chin, which a Hebe might have envied, would indicate that he had seen even fewer summers.

"We are ready, monsieur," said the youthful coxswain.

"Follow me then, Montville; the men may all remain; and see," he said, turning to them, "that you make no brawl with these Englishmen as before! The soldiers who felt your Gallic knocks may take occasion to follow up their quarrel. If they approach, shove off at once, and lie on your oars beyond musket-shot."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the men, putting their shoulders to the boat, and floating her; while their commanding officer, followed by his favorite midshipman, crossed the smooth belt of sand, and, winding rapidly around the base of the cliff, came to a part where the descent was less precipitous.

Their way lay by natural paths, through clumps of foliage of every variety and brilliancy of color.

They had now reached the hedge of aloes and palmetto, forming the boundary of the grounds surrounding the villa of Velasquez.

Winding around it in a direction contrary to that taken by the depredators of the preceding night, they soon came to a latticed gateway, partly hid in the hedge, and close to the unoccupied wing of the mansion. The gate, which his young companion was hastening forward to unlock with a small key handed him by the officer, was battered in pieces, and the dead body of a seaman lay on the threshold, with a fragment of a dragoon's sword half buried in his head.

"Mon Dieu! what mischief has been here?" exclaimed the officer, stooping to examine the features of the dead man. "He is a Spaniard, and, by his garb and arms, no doubt, a pirate. Cold, and stiff!" he added, touching his temples, "he has been long dead. Allons! allons!" he cried to his companion, bounding through the broken gateway—"God preserve dear Constanza!" and, drawing their swords, they both rushed up the avenue, every few rods of which exhibited traces of a recent and severe fight.

By the side of a slain horse lay a dead dragoon, grasping convulsively a wounded Spanish sailor. Although a deep gash cleft his cheek, he still lived; while a consciousness of the death-grapple in which he was held, overcoming the pain of his wound, writhed his features into a terrible expression of horror; his black, lustrous eyes, rolled wildly in their sockets, and his feeble fingers vainly worked to release the vise-like grasp of the dead man.

"Oh, senores, for the love of God, help me! Ay de mi—Ay de mi!—Ave Maria!" and he extended his arms, imploringly.

The officer arrested his rapid progress to the house; his humane feelings overcoming his desire to proceed; and, perhaps, he was at the same time anxious to learn from him the nature and full extent of the bloody signs around him.

"Hold, Montville! let us aid this wretch," he said, moved by the imploring language of the sufferer. "What a fearful embrace!"

With their united efforts, but not without the exercise of great muscular exertion, they disengaged the arms of the dead man from around the living body of his foe—who, during the slow-moving hours of the long night, had borne such unspeakable tortures. How fearfully was the dead avenged! clasping in his close embrace the breathing body of his slayer!

"What, monsieur?" inquired his deliverer, as the buccaneer grasped his cloak, and gave way to a shower of tears, unable to express, in language, his gratitude; "what means all this bloody work? You, it seems, should know something of it!" and his voice and eye betrayed the intensest excitement as he spoke. "Speak, speak!" he reiterated, as the man held up his clasped hands in silence; "answer, man! or, by Heaven! I will give you to a worse fate than the arms of this dead soldier."













































